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Literacy in Manitoba: A Message from the Minister

To ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop the skills they require to become literate and engaged citizens, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning is providing leadership and assistance to our educational partners in support of literacy learning.

This issue of *Education Manitoba* includes several articles about initiatives that support literacy in all academic disciplines, such as the classroom-based professional learning sessions with Regie Routman and the Reading Apprenticeship instructional framework. Another example is the renewal of the English language arts curriculum, which is being developed to help Manitoba teachers provide students with rich literacy experiences that engage them in thinking about complex ideas.

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning has also produced new resources to support literacy, such as the Kindergarten teacher support document *A Time for Learning, A Time for Joy*, the Grade 8 Science resource *Lake Winnipeg Water Stewardship*, and the new *Grade 12 Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability* course. Through effective, engaging, and research-informed literacy instruction and the development of new instructional frameworks and supports, teachers are provided with many of the tools they require to help students successfully achieve their goals and develop their potential to participate fully in society.

The department is also committed to providing responsive and ongoing support to school divisions to sustain and expand the depth and breadth of the work that they undertake to understand and make the most effective use of their students' achievement data. Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning's newly established Student Achievement Support Unit is collaborating with its educational partners to increase student achievement in literacy and numeracy and to close existing achievement gaps.

With the understanding that there is a shared responsibility for increasing student achievement in Manitoba, there is also the belief that a sustained increase in student achievement will be accomplished when educators engage in collaborative inquiry at the school, division, and provincial levels. This collaboration will lead to ongoing focused conversations about student achievement data and to the subsequent development of effective new instructional practices and strategies for all Manitoba schools and school divisions. On March 11th and 12th in Winnipeg, Bruce Wellman engaged with nearly 300 educators from across the province in collective inquiry at the "Got Data? Now What?" conference. This conference was the genesis of a provincial conversation about the role of data to guide planning and inform decision making.

This shared commitment to closing gaps and increasing all students' achievement in literacy and numeracy will be evident in the teaching and learning in every classroom across the province. Using data effectively to inform our practice and to create literacy-rich environments is essential to support the development of strong, literate students. However, we also know that fully developing all aspects of our educational programming will require collective, concerted effort and collaboration from school leaders, educators, students, parents, and communities.

As a government, we are committed to making the strides necessary to ensure that all Manitoba students have the educational experiences they need to advance their academic achievement.

James Allum
Minister of Education and Advanced Learning

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A Balanced Literacy Approach to Learning French

By Arla N. Strauss
Curriculum Consultant, Bureau de l'éducation française Division

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning continues to revitalize French language education with the launch of *French: Communication and Culture*, the new curriculum framework of outcomes for Grades 4 to 12 French (formerly known as *Basic French*). The vision of *French: Communication and Culture* is "to provide Manitoba students with quality French instruction that enables them to communicate in French and to appreciate francophone cultures."

In recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in the philosophy and approach to learning and acquiring an additional language. In response, the department's Bureau de l'éducation française Division (BEF) has adopted a balanced literacy approach to learning that places emphasis on oral communication, which is the foundation of learning a language. This learning is developmental and requires reading and writing to balance the cycle. The new framework document also states that "reading provides opportunities for students to understand the language that they have heard and to see language structures in print. Writing provides other opportunities for students to consolidate their learning and to communicate their messages."

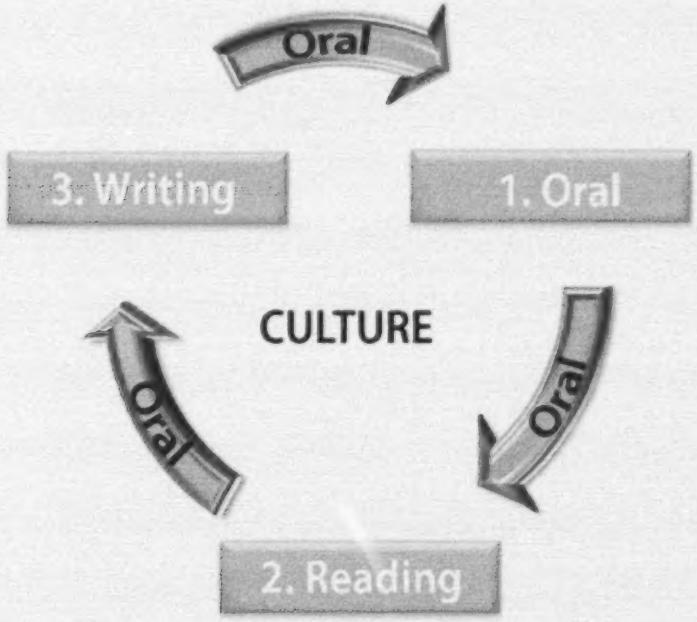
This approach is complete when it is rounded out with the continuous integration of various aspects of francophone cultures.

It is important that teachers of the new framework of outcomes see themselves as teachers of literacy who guide the literacy development of their students during French instruction. Research has proven that the processes involved in learning another language are similar to those used to learn a first language. Students build on and transfer skills that they already possess in their first language to develop skills in the second language. Therefore, the literacy strategies taught to develop students' oral, reading, and writing skills in their first language transfer to the development of these skills in French.

As a result, students in French class benefit from a rich linguistic environment where they have additional time to develop literacy strategies. Students also find themselves more engaged in their learning because this approach provides them with many opportunities to do the following:

- Participate in scaffolded activities that follow the learning cycle from oral communication to reading and writing
- Use and re-use the French language (modelled by the teacher) for the purpose of real communication
- Try progressively more difficult tasks, which enhances their language and cognitive development in both their first and second languages
- Become more autonomous language learners
- Make personal connections to learning French
- Understand the real-life value and advantages of being able to communicate in French
- Grow as global citizens

French: Communication and Culture offers a unique opportunity for learners in the English Program to benefit from quality, engaging, and effective instruction in French.



To view the framework document online, visit <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/m12/frpub/ped/fdb/cadre_4-12/index.html>.

For more information on the implementation of the *French: Communication and Culture* framework, please contact

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Certificate in School Leadership

By David Yeo
Director, Education Administration Services Branch

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning is pleased to announce the introduction of the Certificate in School Leadership, which will replace Level 1 and 2 administrator certificates. The renewed qualifications for the Certificate in School Leadership strengthen and recognize the current education and professional preparation that are essential to supporting effective leadership in our schools. Meeting the qualifications under the pre-existing administrator certificates will continue to be an available option until September 2017.

The new qualifications are based on a framework of knowledge and skills collaboratively developed by our Manitoba educational partner organizations and faculties of education. These qualifications are reflected in core course requirements as well as field-led and delivered courses within a post-baccalaureate program. The *Certificate in School Leadership Guidelines for Qualification* can be found on the department website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/profcert/certificates/othercertificates/index.html>.

As noted in the guidelines, a post-baccalaureate program includes any approved diploma or certificate program of a minimum of 30 credit hours with a focus on educational administration beyond a Bachelor of Education degree. A Master's degree with a specialization in educational administration will also meet the new certificate qualifications.

Field-led courses are currently being developed and will be added to the guidelines as they become available for publication.

Questions may be directed to the Professional Certification and Student Records Unit. Contact information for this unit is included in the guidelines.

Distance Learning—What's New?

The following new ISO courses are now available. Order a teacher reference copy today or register students in these courses.

- Grade 12 Calculus
- Grade 12 Pre-Calculus Mathematics
- *12e année, Mathématiques au quotidien*

For more information, contact the Distance Learning Unit
Telephone: 204-325-1700
or 1-800-465-9915
Email: distance.learning@gov.mb.ca
Website: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso/index.html

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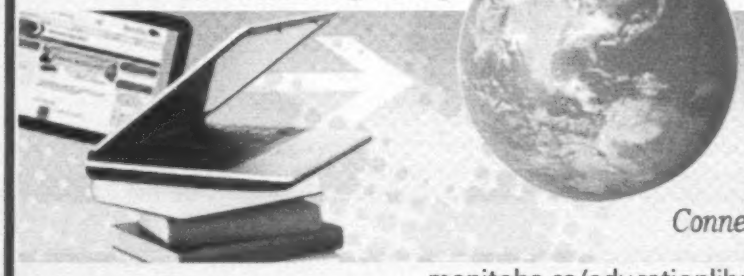

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Critical Thinking in Early Years ELA

By Karen Boyd
English Language Arts Consultant

The Manitoba report card is an important information tool that ensures that parents get the information they need to be full partners in their children's education. It is intended to help enhance the quality of education in Manitoba and to build strong partnerships among students, teachers, and parents.

With respect to English language arts specifically, the Manitoba report card provides details about students' comprehension, communication, and critical thinking. The presence of the critical thinking category on the report card from Grades 1 to 6 highlights its importance to Early Years teaching and learning.

In English language arts, critical thinking involves students thinking about how language is used to recognize and analyze inequities, viewpoints, and bias in texts and ideas. Students investigate complex moral and ethical issues and conflicts while contemplating the actions that can be taken, suggest alternative viewpoints, and contribute other perspectives. Critical thinking when reading, writing, viewing, representing, listening, and speaking ensures that students are engaged in meaning-making that is informed and useful.

Discussions around national (PCAP) and international (PISA) assessments reflect the importance of critical thinking in reading. PCAP defines reading as a "dynamic, interactive process whereby the reader constructs meaning from text." PISA defines reading literacy as "the ability to understand, use, and reflect on written texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate effectively in society." These assessments, which are administered to students in the Middle Years, require students to be effective critical thinkers when reading.

Three decades ago, Stephen P. Norris made the observation that "most students do not score well on tests that measure ability to recognize assumptions, evaluate arguments and appraise inferences." This observation is still valid, which draws attention to the need for an earlier focus on developing critical thinking in English language arts.

Teachers can teach critical thinking and support development through planned learning opportunities. In English language arts, many of these opportunities are closely linked to text choice. Interacting with print, visual, digital, multimodal, and other texts provides opportunities for students to ask questions, assess statements, consider possibilities, and look for proof. This can only be done if the texts that children are engaging with are rich and complex.

In the Early Years, there is a focus on teaching students to access text independently. This requires teachers to choose texts that have words, structures, and vocabulary that students can read with accuracy and fluency. For example, the benchmark books provided in the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System are written with controlled vocabulary and structure that allow for the assessment of efficient processing of text at different levels. This is a specific purpose that is necessary, but does not reflect the full range of reading experiences. *Dog Stories*, a benchmark Level L book, is about a girl who was "reading about a dog who rescued a man. She decided to write a letter to her favourite author, Julia Reed. She wanted the author to write a book about her dog, Golden Boy." *Dog Stories* provides a very linear, concrete narrative.

In comparison, a book found in bookstores and libraries, *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne, would also be a Level L book, as categorized by Fountas & Pinnell. This richly illustrated text is told from the perspective of four different characters, each with their own font style. The stories interweave to explore issues of class and privilege, loneliness, and alienation. Children have the opportunity to examine both the implied and stated information in the text and to consider how different perspectives can change the way that we interact with the world. This text provides opportunities for both independent reading, but also for rich, quality discussion about important and engaging topics.

A continuous diet of low-level texts may help with low-order, literal comprehension and word-calling skills, but it will not help students to negotiate the vast amounts of information that they are exposed to in different contexts. Early Years students need to be making decisions about the information they are encountering and to evaluate the bias, perspective, and viewpoints presented. In order to accurately report on the Manitoba report card category of critical thinking in English language arts, teachers and students need rich quality texts that are chosen for more than the "level" of the words and sentences.

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Learning to Write by Writing

By Allyson Matczuk
Early Literacy Consultant

As part of an inter-divisional professional learning strategy, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning has joined with River East Transcona, St. James-Assiniboia, and the Winnipeg School Division to provide these divisions' schools with the opportunity to take part in the Regie Routman in Residence professional learning series.

This series is intended to accelerate literacy achievement for all learners. Regie Routman and two expert facilitators from her team, Nancy McLean and Sandra Figueroa, work for a week each year with teachers and staff in individual schools. Both students and teachers look forward to the visits, and many are proud of the writing that they have done in these sessions. The sessions initiate conversations among staff about learning, and they carry these conversations over to their professional learning community meetings throughout the school year.

This inter-divisional professional learning strategy is an investment in teacher expertise based on a model of collaboration, collegiality, and congruence in teaching approaches. Key to the project's success is the high level of involvement and leadership in literacy by each school principal and the long-term commitment to change by everyone involved.

The original purpose of the project was to create professional literacy communities where Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers and principals could extend their own knowledge about writing instruction in the Early Years. The aim was to create a core team of models, mentors, and facilitators that could then influence other professional learning communities. Interest and enthusiasm has led to an expansion of the number of school divisions, schools, and grade levels involved.

Regie Routman has recently published a book called *Read, Write, Lead*, which celebrates the positive impact of professional literacy communities and highlights the *Regie Routman in Residence* project in Winnipeg.

One of the many highlights of the project is the collegiality that has developed within and among the participating school divisions. Visits to other schools and classrooms allow for a valuable exchange of ideas and understandings at a professional level. Sandy Figueroa, one of the three project development leaders, said the following about the *Regie Routman in Residence* project:

> *"I [look] forward to this work. I never really thought this kind of work would happen in my lifetime. It is the hardest, most invigorating, and meaningful work I have ever done. I am so tired afterwards but there is nothing like that feeling when I know we made a positive difference in the lives of so many leaders, teachers, and children. Thank you so much for including me in this amazing journey!"*

The original implementation team continues to support schools in their journeys. The school climates are alive with excitement about writing, learning, and teaching. Residencies are now taking place at several schools throughout the divisions at many points in the school year and there is a waiting list of schools eager to participate in the project. To support the expansion of the *Regie Routman in Residence* project, the original three school divisions are training their own facilitators this year with support from Regie Routman and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning.

For more information about the *Regie Routman in Residence* project, visit <www.regieroutman.org/professional-development/regie-routman-in-residence/> or contact
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Regie Routman is an internationally respected educator and author with more than 40 years of experience teaching, coaching, and leading in diverse schools across the United States and Canada.

Professional Learning and Literacy Development through Reading Apprenticeship

By Shelley Warkentin
ELA and Literacy Consultant

Although all academic reading involves comprehending, interpreting, analyzing, and critiquing texts, each discipline or subject area has its own set of literacy practices or ways of thinking, knowing, and doing. All students need ample opportunities to engage with the particular texts and the thinking and discourse surrounding these texts in each discipline. The past practice of pulling some students away from disciplinary learning in the hope that they will become better readers has proven to be ineffective.

Research by Rafael Heller and Cynthia Greenleaf has demonstrated that students benefit from being engaged in reading, writing, and talking about academic content, not from doing isolated, basic, skills-focused reading exercises. For students to become better readers, thinkers, and learners, teachers must therefore model, scaffold, and guide students in experimenting with ways of interacting with and approaching texts in discipline-specific ways.

Along with researchers from the Strategic Literacy Initiative of WestEd, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, the Border Land School Division, École secondaire Kelvin High School, École River Heights School, and Centre scolaire Léo-Rémillard embarked in August 2011 on a three-year Reading Apprenticeship pilot project that focused on collaborative, professional inquiry and learning. This involved intensive training for both divisional and school leadership teams, as well as for teachers from each school. Together, educators in the pilot thought about and experimented with different processes they could use to encourage metacognitive conversation in their classrooms in order to empower students' development and meaningful use of disciplinary literacy practices. As educators explored and experimented with the Reading Apprenticeship framework both in professional learning and coaching sessions and in job-embedded ways, there was a change in how teaching and learning looked and sounded in our schools and classrooms.

With metacognitive conversation at its centre, the Reading Apprenticeship instructional framework fosters cognitive and non-cognitive learning factors through four overlapping dimensions of classroom life: social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge-building.

- The social dimension is the community aspect of learning. When students see the classroom as a safe environment, they see other students and their teacher as resources for learning and feel comfortable sharing what they understand and what they struggled to understand in complex texts.
- The personal dimension is the students' personal sense of identities as competent readers and learners, as well as their awareness of their purposes and goals for reading and learning. Students who have a strong awareness of their identities and who can connect current academic learning to future career or educational goals are more likely to show persistence and achieve academic success.
- The cognitive dimension is the students' ability to use mental processes, including problem-solving strategies, with academic texts. Metacognition, self-regulation, and cognitive strategies contribute to deeper understanding, as well as improved academic performance and feelings of self-efficacy.
- The knowledge-building dimension involves identifying the prior knowledge readers bring to a discipline and its texts and then developing that knowledge further through interaction with text and other learners. As students read, they not only develop their knowledge of the content of the text, they also develop their skills in language and word construction, improve their sense of genre and text structure, and increase their exposure to a wide variety of representations and discipline-specific discourse practices.

Reading Apprenticeship works with any curriculum. It enables students to engage with academic texts and knowledge in specific disciplines. Teachers apprentice students by modelling, mentoring, and providing scaffolded support, teaching them the tacit reasoning processes, strategies, and discourse rules they need to comprehend texts from each discipline. At the centre of this apprenticeship, the teacher and students have an ongoing conversation where they think about and discuss their personal relationships to reading and learning, the social environment and resources of the classroom, their cognitive activity, and the knowledge required to make sense of texts. This metacognitive conversation is carried out internally as the teacher and students read individually and consider their own mental processes, and externally as they talk about their processes, resources, and motivations for reading and discuss their interactions with texts.

Enacting the Reading Apprenticeship framework in Manitoba classrooms has resulted in a significant increase in student engagement, confidence, understanding, and achievement. Teachers who participated in the three-year pilot project became more efficient with their use of time and more effective in their planning. They moved from a focus on more concrete activities or tools to a focus on designing curriculum-based learning experiences that orchestrate the dimensions of learning and embed literacy scaffolds and supports. Their ability to design responsive instruction through careful observations of students and student learning also improved. As teachers became more adept at modelling and scaffolding metacognitive conversation, they noticed that their students were engaging more deeply in their learning, working collaboratively to solve problems, taking ownership of their own learning, and, consequently, applying increasingly

disciplinary ways of thinking and of constructing knowledge.

The Reading Apprenticeship framework is not only employed in classrooms; it can be used by all members of the school system. Metacognitive conversation, reflection, and collaborative inquiry ground and facilitate everybody's learning, and build coherence across the system. Although educators may have profound effects on their students, communities working together stretch and sustain these individual efforts. The most remarkable growth in student learning and teacher capacity was shown by school divisions that ensured the following:

- Coordinated leadership that actively involves divisional administration, school administration, and teachers in planning toward a shared vision and common goals
- Deliberate, intentional, and ongoing collaboration across school teams and within schools
- Expected and ongoing professional learning through examination of student work, collaborative problem solving, coaching and mentoring, and classroom observations
- Framing of professional conversations around curriculum, Reading Apprenticeship dimensions, metacognitive conversations, and observations about student learning
- Consistent and regular collaborative analysis of meaningful data about student growth and progress to inform classroom planning

The professional learning and inquiry through Reading Apprenticeship has had a profoundly positive effect on student and educator learning, engagement, and confidence. Because developing disciplinary literacies is a complex and wide-reaching goal, sustaining and deepening this approach to literacy teaching and learning will require a long-term view and consistent focus. Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning has extended the reach of this professional learning and inquiry and is presently collaborating with six other school divisions in a three-year intensive implementation plan, offering yearly 3 + 2 day institutes to school teams across the province, and continuing to support leadership learning to grow and sustain this work.

To find out more about Reading Apprenticeship in Manitoba, see "Turning the Tables in Manitoba Schools: Taking a Long View of Professional Learning and Literacy Development" by Lisa Richardson and Shelley Warkentin at <http://readingapprenticeship.org>.

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Moving Forward with a New English Language Arts Curriculum in Manitoba

By Karen Boyd and Shelley Warkentin
ELA and Literacy Consultants

In order to become literate and informed citizens, students require deep, flexible thinking skills. To help students develop these skills, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning is consulting with its educational partners in the development of a new English language arts curriculum that addresses this need.

English language arts as a discipline

Because language is central to all learning, each discipline or field of study plays a role in supporting literacy development by engaging students in particular ways of thinking, knowing, and doing, thereby providing multiple and disciplinary perspectives for making meaning. English language arts is a discipline in itself, but it also acts as a support for learning that transfers through and between the other disciplines. Through practice in the field of English language arts, learners become flexible, reflective, and critical thinkers who are able to interact with complex ideas about themselves, the world, and society. English language arts also encourages creativity and imagination.

What grounds the design of the new English language arts curriculum?

Students, educators, families, and communities work together to value, promote, and develop literacies that students need to be active participants in all areas of their lives. The Manitoba English language arts curriculum is grounded in the belief that students are competent literacy learners who have been engaged in language learning since birth. The English language arts curriculum supports learners in building upon and developing their competencies and working on those competencies that are specific for success in school and academic literacies.

Competencies are

- deep and multi-faceted ways of knowing, doing, and being
- representative of the ways in which knowledge is held, passed on, worked with, and created in the world
- owned by the learner as a transferable tool for problem solving and decision making
- changeable over time to meet the needs of particular contexts

Students need a range of opportunities to develop, build upon, and deepen competencies within meaningful contexts. The English language arts curriculum advocates that learning occur within rich and complex contexts rather than through a series of activities focused on isolated skills and strategies. Such contexts would in fact allow learners to explore significant and complex ideas about the world while enacting the practices of English language arts. Tapping into students' identities and communities, along with co-creating meaningful and rich contexts in ELA, can provide a focus for language learning and give students opportunities to explore significant ideas that have enduring value beyond the classroom.

English language arts teaching and learning is effective when it is purposeful, dynamic, fulfilling, and authentic. It is rooted in evidence- and research-based practice that includes rich, authentic, and interconnected experiences. Such experiences

- are driven by powerful teaching and learning practices
- include multiple forms of print, non-print, human, electronic, and virtual resources that are current, credible, and representative of many viewpoints and world views, including Aboriginal peoples' ways of knowing
- provide ongoing opportunities for students to engage in deep and flexible thinking
- allow students to demonstrate and reflect on learning in multiple ways, over time, and in multiple contexts
- allow teachers to assess language learning over time within a range of interconnected practices in ways that encourage students to show increasing competency

Snapshots of Deep Learning in Meaningful Contexts

Students in a Grade 2 classroom are exploring ideas of sustainability through consideration of Canadian apple crops. They have collected and explored various books and maps about apples and the places in Canada where apples grow. They have visited a grocery store to find out the cost of apples and where they come from. The students are now beginning to write a story about their lunch apple's journey from seed to lunch bag and beyond. They are encouraged to refer to the charts, maps, and books that have been gathered through the research to communicate the story of their apple to others.

A Grade 9 English language arts classroom is filled with focused discussion, reflection, and research as they dig into shared inquiry around the question "What is the real cost of fame?" While one group of students is intently deliberating about its benefits and burdens, another is pouring through various fiction and non-fiction sources that they have collected and examined over the past while to seek out examples, opinions, and viewpoints on the issue. Yet another group of students is posting a link to a video they created along with their commentary in a class blog.

Effective English language arts programs provide opportunities for learners to use interrelated practices that are specific to the discipline yet also support learning across disciplines. The English language arts curriculum identifies four practices that ground all teaching and learning in English language arts. These represent the interconnected big ideas of English language arts.

- Language as sense-making requires students to understand what they hear, read, and view by using a variety of strategies as well as communicating in ways that are effective for their purpose and audience.
- Language as system focuses on how language works. In order for students to participate fully in learning, they need opportunities to investigate, understand, and apply the ways in which language works. Such opportunities would include exploring the patterns, relationships, and conventions that are important for communication and meaning-making: decoding and coding, morphology, grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, forms, genres, and structures.
- Language as exploration and design allows students to deepen their knowledge of topics, ideas, and information, as well as create new ideas, solve problems, and communicate to others. Rich contexts would include opportunities for articulating questions and designing solutions to problems by analyzing, interpreting, and communicating their learning and understanding.
- Language as power and agency explicitly defines and builds critical thinking into instruction at all levels by supporting students to recognize inequities and bias, to work with moral and ethical issues, and to consider actions and alternatives. Students need opportunities to use language that reflects their identities and enables them to advocate for themselves, their communities, and the environment. Learners understand that all texts represent a particular way of thinking and that language can benefit some voices while silencing others. This understanding encourages them to question, interrogate, and reimagine meaningful texts.

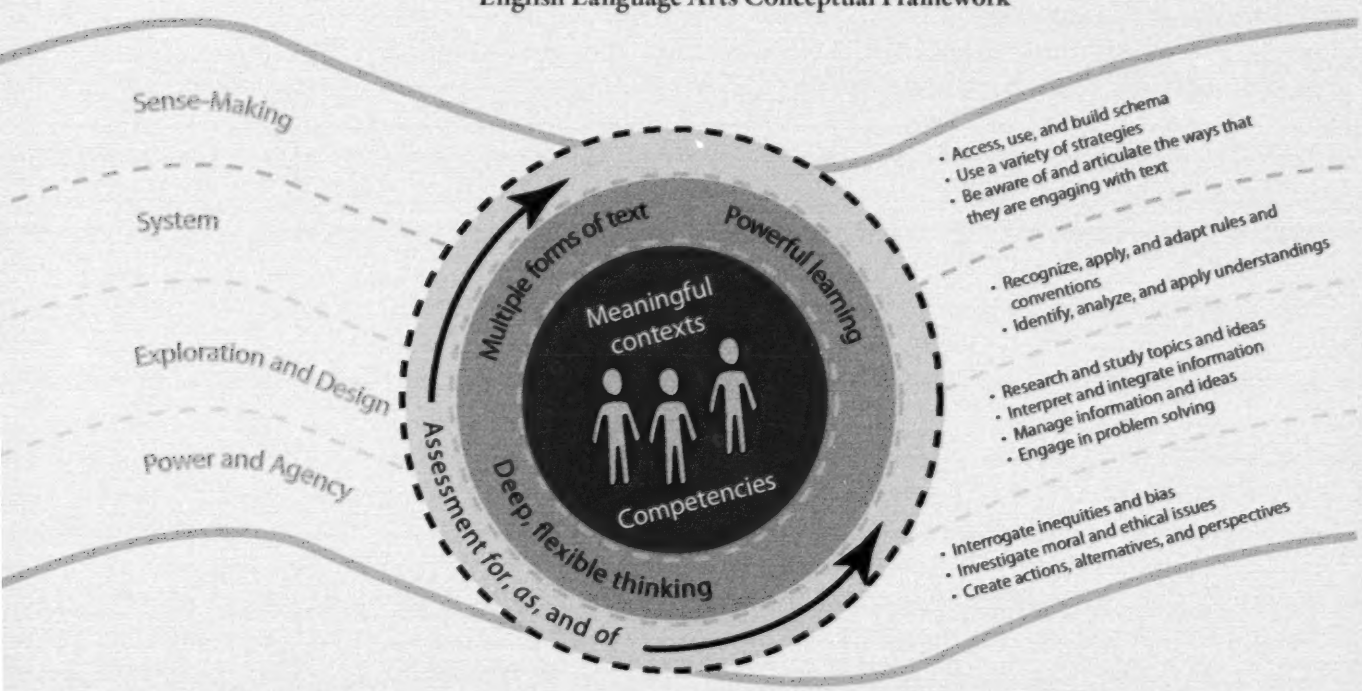
The English Language Arts Conceptual Framework below represents underpinnings, relationships, and environments that support English language arts learning.

How is the new English language arts curriculum structured?

The new English language arts curriculum recognizes the complex and interrelated ways that students and teachers practise together in meaningful contexts. Curriculum is, therefore, designed in such a way that each component within the whole has a clear function for teaching, learning, and assessment, while also recognizing that each component is contained within and connected to another. The diagram on page 10 (Structural Design of the English Language Arts Curriculum) represents a nested system of ELA curriculum components. These components would be set within the larger-scale picture of English language arts – its conceptual framework.

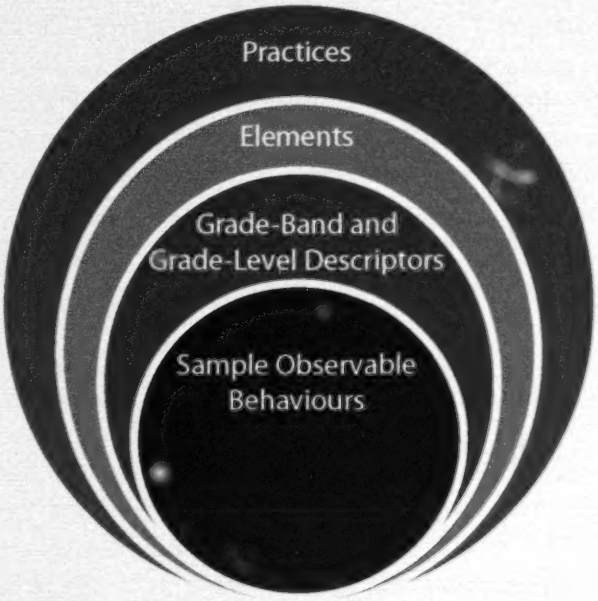
Continued on page 10

English Language Arts Conceptual Framework


Sense-Making
System
Exploration and Design
Power and Agency
Multiple forms of text
Powerful learning
Meaningful contexts
Competencies
Deep, flexible thinking
Assessment for, as, and of
• Access, use, and build schema
• Use a variety of strategies
• Be aware of and articulate the ways that they are engaging with text
• Recognize, apply, and adapt rules and conventions
• Identify, analyze, and apply understandings
• Research and study topics and ideas
• Interpret and integrate information
• Manage information and ideas
• Engage in problem solving
• Interrogate inequities and bias
• Investigate moral and ethical issues
• Create actions, alternatives, and perspectives

Continued from page 9

Structural Design of the English Language Arts Curriculum



Practices:

These represent the big ideas of the English language arts discipline or its valued ways of knowing, thinking, and doing. Teachers design learning experiences in such a way that learners have opportunities to enact all four practices.

Elements:

Each practice is characterized by elements. These represent how the practices are generally enacted from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The elements provide a focus for instruction, and students enhance their practice by developing their use of these elements.

Grade-Band and Grade-Level Descriptors:

Descriptors help teachers build profiles of student practice, including what they know and do, at the end of grade bands as well as at the end of grade levels. Grade-band descriptors support teacher teams, individual teachers, and multi-level teachers in taking a more longitudinal view of the learning and planning for learning. Grade-band descriptors also recognize that learning develops over time and across multiple contexts.

Sample Observable Behaviours:

Observable behaviours capture multiple ways that learners may show their learning. These possibilities are not exhaustive, nor are they designed to be used as a checklist. Sample observable behaviours provide concrete examples of what students might say or do in relation to grade-band and grade-level descriptors.

Reflecting on and moving forward with a new English language arts curriculum

One of the key organizational components of the new English language arts curriculum is the centrality of reflective practice. In order for new curricula to have the impact of improving practice, educators, schools, and school divisions need to use renewal as an opportunity to look at what they are doing, why they are doing it, how effective it is, and what other possibilities might exist to improve effectiveness.

In order to launch and support conversations about English language arts, Manitoba educators are invited to join the Reflecting on and Moving Forward with English Language Arts Curriculum group in MaPLE. This group is designed to support educators in reflecting together on current understandings, research, pedagogy, and curriculum in English language arts. School teams, groups of educators, and individuals are invited to think about, interact with, and have conversations about select draft pieces of the new English language arts curriculum.

Consultation will be ongoing with stakeholders across the province, both in person and on MaPLE. The following chart identifies key actions and dates related to English language arts curriculum pilot and implementation.

Implementation Timeline			
Date	K–8	9–10	11–12
Fall 2015	Pilot		
Fall 2016	Voluntary Implementation	Pilot	
Fall 2017	Province-wide Implementation	Voluntary Implementation	Pilot
Fall 2018		Province-wide Implementation	Voluntary Implementation
Fall 2019			Province-wide Implementation

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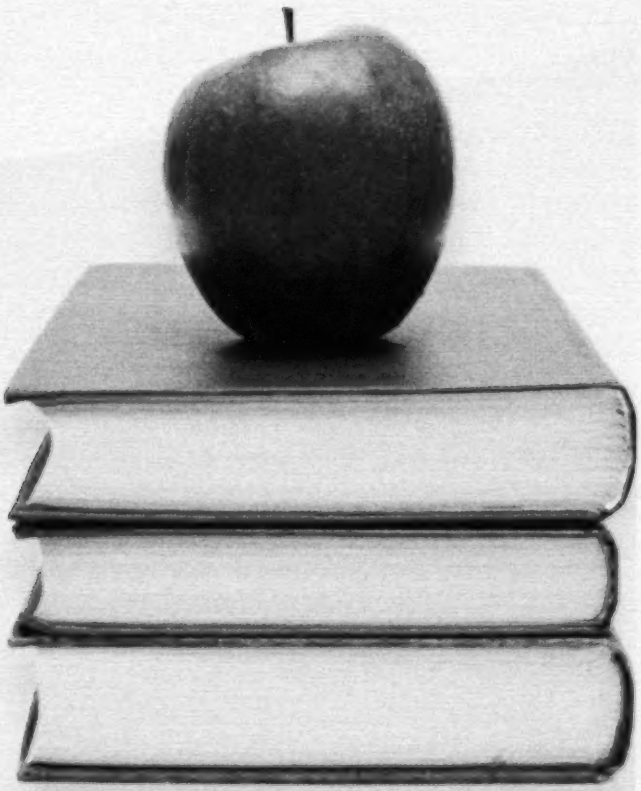

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Manitoba Writing Project

By Michelle Honeyford, Ph.D.
University of Manitoba Faculty of Education

The Manitoba Writing Project (MBWP) is a professional network and inquiry community for educators and educational partners focused particularly on writing *for* social justice and human rights and writing *as* a human right. Our goal is to contribute directly to educating and empowering young people to think critically, develop passion for human rights issues, and identify as writers who can effectively communicate in public dialogue.

The MBWP was formed from a series of conversations with educators around the province that focused on understanding writing and the teaching of writing. MBWP work in Manitoba has been inspired by its collaboration with the National Writing Project (NWP) and the Holocaust Educators Network (HEN) in the United States. Although the MBWP reflects Manitoba's unique context, it has drawn from these successful professional development programs in key ways.

First, we understand that to be effective teachers of writing, educators must be writers themselves. Launched for the first time last summer, the MBWP Summer Institute offers an intensive writing program, with time reserved every day for participants to write, share their writing with one another, and develop new practices and approaches to teaching writing.

Second, we engage teachers in issues of social justice and human rights through multiple modalities and experiences, including art, film, digital media, artifacts, and literature. In the process, educators explore the critical connections among written, spoken, and visual language and social justice and human rights. They deepen their own understandings of human rights, develop curricula for teaching writing for/as human rights, and explore the power of social media, digital literacies, and "new writing" as forms of participation and activism in human rights issues.

Third, we understand that teachers are agents of educational reform. MBWP participants are expected to play a vital role in leading efforts to enact pedagogies of critical literacy and social justice. Manitoba Writing Project teacher-leaders study and share effective practices, work collaboratively with other educators, design resources, and take on new roles in their teaching contexts.

Fourth, we recognize that educators are more effective when they have opportunities to think, learn, and grow with others. A pilot project is supporting educators in research and curriculum development in writing for/as social justice and human rights, creating platforms for educators to collaborate, share, and publish.

Finally, we are committed to Manitoba youth. When young people are equipped with the skills they need to nurture and express their passion for human rights issues, not only are they better off, so are the rest of us.

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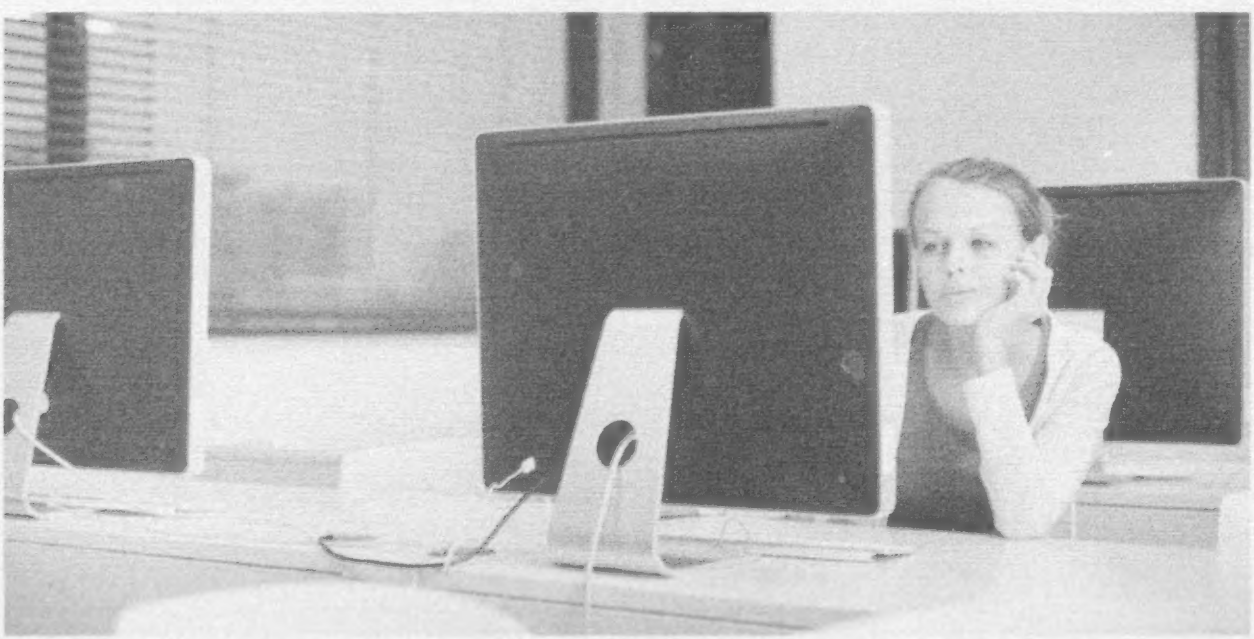
Manitoba Writing Project: http://manitobawritingproject.weebly.com

National Writing Project: www.nwp.org

Holocaust Educators Network: www.thememoriallibrary.org/about/holocaust-educators-network/



What's New with ESD?

By Anne MacDiarmid

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is one of Manitoba's priority action areas for education, and the province has continued to strengthen its capacity to support schools and their divisions.

In spring 2015, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning is releasing a new issue of *ESD Newsletter*, which provides updates on programs and highlights new resources that support sustainability education and ESD school planning. It can be found at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/newsletters.html>. Included in that newsletter is information on the following initiatives:

UNESCO Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The United Nations declared 2005 to 2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). The overall goal of the Decade for ESD (2005–2014) was to integrate sustainable development values into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in behaviour to "allow for a more sustainable and just society for all."

To mark the end of the decade, in November 2014, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) hosted a global conference of over 1000 participants in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan to celebrate the strides taken in the past 10 years, as well as to set the agenda for the future of ESD. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) contributed details on strategies and successes and assisted in the formation of the Global Action Programme (GAP), which is the direction that UNESCO and its partners have outlined for the post-2015 agenda. Overall, the GAP seeks to scale up all current sustainability plans to benefit everyone across the globe.

The following five priority action areas are key leverage points to advance the ESD agenda:

1. **Advancing policy:** Mainstream ESD into education and sustainable development policies to create an enabling environment for ESD and to bring about systemic change.
2. **Transforming learning and training environments:** Integrate sustainability principles in education and training settings. (In particular, transforming learning and training environments includes focusing on whole-school approaches to advancing sustainable development.)
3. **Building the capacities of educators and trainers:** Increase the capacities of educators and trainers for effective delivery of ESD.
4. **Empowering and mobilizing youth:** Generate ESD actions among youth.
5. **Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level:** Scale up community-based ESD programs and local multi-stakeholder ESD networks.

"Deputy Minister Gerald Farthing confirmed the GAP commitment that every school will have an ESD School Plan by 2015."

During the global conference, the final global monitoring and evaluation report, *Shaping the Future We Want*, was launched. This report focuses on the outcomes of the UN Decade for ESD around the world and demonstrates how education has advanced as a critical tool for moving societies toward sustainability.

To view the full report, go to <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002301/230171e.pdf>.

UNESCO called on stakeholders to make specific contributions to launch the GAP. Stakeholders from 80 countries have responded with 363 commitments. Manitoba was one out of five of the 365 GAP commitments selected for presentation at the closing of the conference.

Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning Deputy Minister Gerald Farthing confirmed the GAP commitment that every school will have an ESD School Plan by 2015. The province will continue to support Manitoba schools in achieving this goal by providing support materials such as the *Guide to Sustainable Schools, 2nd edition*, the Domain Framework, and the ESD in Manitoba curriculum documents found in the ESD School Plans section of the ESD homepage at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/>.

ECO-Globe Recognition

The Eco-Globe Schools annual recognition program has served as a way of promoting the successes of schools across Manitoba. Each year, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning gives schools recognition in the Awareness, Action, or Transformation categories in order to acknowledge their commitment to ESD and to promote the sharing of innovative ideas and practices. Transformation schools, such as Crestview School, Grosvenor School, and Sigurbjorg Stefansson Early School, are examples of the whole-system approach to ESD and can inspire positive changes towards sustainability. Schools can apply for Eco-Globe status by May 15th of each school year. For more information, visit <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/eco_globe/index.html>.

Refuse Refuse

What began as a coffee can in a classroom in Landmark Elementary has grown into a division-wide cultural change with regard to waste reduction. The whole journey—as well as guidelines and tips on starting a waste minimization initiative in your own school—is described in detail in the guidebook *Refuse Refuse (ri-fyooz ref-yoos): A Guide to Waste Reduction in Manitoba Schools*. This document can be found on the ESD website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd>.

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Manitoba's Community School Program

By Dino Altieri
Assistant Director, Aboriginal Education Directorate

It has long been recognized that schools have a transformative power to create healthier, brighter futures for children, families, and communities. This power works best when students and families are able to take maximum advantage of investments in the public education system and the rich learning opportunities it offers them. A number of students and families, however, are not positioned to take full advantage of these investments and opportunities due to a variety of circumstances related to family stress, physical and mental health concerns, housing and transportation needs, colonialism, and racism, which are often, but not exclusively, entangled with poverty.

The community school philosophy has evolved to better address the effects of disadvantage and marginalization on children and families. It acknowledges that some of the education system's most pressing challenges stem from complex multi-faceted social problems that go beyond a school's or education system's ability or mandate to address alone. Learning well requires more than effective educational policies and programming; it also requires effective social and public health policies and services.

With a community schools approach, community, government, and corporate resources are mobilized and used to extend and expand learning time and opportunities—before and after school, on weekends, and during summer. This can include early literacy, tutoring, mentoring, as well as social, recreational, and cultural activities. Breakfast and lunch programs are a common feature in schools. A growing emphasis on human service collaboration and integration provides further opportunities for social workers, public health nurses or nurse practitioners, mental health workers, and community support workers to enable students and families to overcome various non-academic barriers to learning.

Schools are seen as the logical delivery site for added support services, as they are considered a central, trusted institution: a "hub" within the community that has unparalleled contact with students and families. While schools vary in how they apply and shape this philosophy, it shares several common characteristics:

- A focus on education and student achievement
- School, family, and community connections
- Extended hours and opportunities
- Partnerships
- A designated staff person who develops partnerships and mobilizes resources that support the core learning program

Since 2005, under the Community Schools Partnership Initiative, the Province of Manitoba has supported the expansion of schools adopting the community school approach. To date, there are 29 northern, rural, and urban schools in 14 school divisions participating in this initiative and that have reported positive responses about the impact of this strategy on students and families. A good number of schools outside of this initiative have also adopted the community schools approach.

In December 2013, *The Community Schools Act* received Royal Assent and embedded the community school philosophy and approach into legislation. The Act established The Community Schools Program (CSP), which incorporates the 29 schools that were formally part of the Community Schools Partnership Initiative. It also called for the formation of a Community Schools Network that offers any Manitoba public school interested in exploring the community schools approach with access to planning information, study sites, and a range of professional learning and training events and activities. A key feature of the legislation is the establishment of a Deputy Minister's Committee on Community Schools to provide overall direction to the CSP. This includes working collaboratively on finding ways to braid educational, social, and public health policy and programming.

A community schools approach in tandem with sound educational policies and programming can help families take maximum advantage of educational opportunities, enhance educational equity, and reduce the achievement gap. As part of a more comprehensive strategy, it can advance social and public health policy with targeted prevention and early intervention strategies that support family well-being and community development while strengthening educational success for all students.

For more information about the Community Schools Program and the Community Schools Network, please contact
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Research Profile

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Retaining the Voices and Understandings of Our Nations: Language's Essential Connection to Identity

By Frank Deer

I grew up in Kahnawake, a Kanienke'ha community in southern Quebec, through the 1980s and 90s. During these formative years, I attended band-managed schools, learned of traditions and spirituality from community members, developed a rudimentary understanding of my ancestral language, and bore witness to the struggles associated with indigenous/non-indigenous relations. My perspective on my own identity was affected by these experiences in a variety of ways and can sometimes make it difficult to situate myself in our transcultural society. Although I don't often feel it necessary to explain my indigeneity to others, I sometimes find that I'm explaining it to myself.

My personal and professional life trajectories have brought me to Western Canada where I've found that my experiences, and subsequent feelings of identity, are not dissimilar to those of other indigenous people. Perhaps the most interesting of these similarities is the desire to affirm, in part or whole, unique manifestations of indigenous knowledge, heritage, consciousness, and tradition that are relevant to the self.

This is not a desire that is held by individuals alone. Many communities have collective visions of this desire. Government departments have begun demonstrating their commitment toward assisting in such journeys of affirmation, and the discourse around primary and secondary education has begun to embrace the notion of what is sometimes referred to as cultural revitalization and celebration.

My work is intended to investigate and promote the ways in which primary and secondary education supports one rather important dimension of the journey of indigenous peoples toward affirmation of their respective identities: indigenous languages. A capacity that I've frequently cited as the principal proxy for cultural identity, indigenous languages are at a sort of crossroads in many parts of this land. Many are, according to numerous studies and reports, set to disappear in the next few generations.

With the decline and loss of indigenous languages comes, according to many, the decline of a world-view. Perhaps we've all heard or read of the notion that language and culture are intrinsically connected—as I get older, I've come to better appreciate this notion. The notion of identity and language as inseparable may be better understood when one considers the richness of traditional meaning associated with an ancestral language, as opposed to maintaining a lexicographical preoccupation with translation that assigns primacy to the understandings acquired by those of the dominant culture. When a language goes into disuse, unique dimensions of identity associated with the self and community that are so replete with the imagery and motifs of ancestors may be adversely affected.

The importance of indigenous languages to the ethno-cultural identity of indigenous peoples is the focus of my current research. I recently received a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to support my work in community-based sustainability of indigenous languages. I believe it is important to understand what will lend to the viability of indigenous languages in 21st century Canada. By exploring and sharing the successes that some have experienced in the sustainability of their respective languages, indigenous peoples and communities may benefit from a stronger connection to their own indigeneity.

Profile: Frank Deer

Frank Deer is an Assistant Professor and Director of Indigenous Initiatives at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Education. Having received his Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Saskatchewan in 2008, Frank has worked in the area of indigenous education with a focus on citizenship, identity, and indigenous literature and oral discourse. Frank is the author of refereed articles in such journals as the *Canadian Journal of Education*, *Canadian and International Education*, and the *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. Frank's study *First Nations Languages: A Comparative Study in Culturally Relevant Sustainability* is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Frank has served as a classroom teacher in the Frontier School Division and Winnipeg School Division.

Mission Possible: Sustaining and Deepening Our School's Literacy Work

By Leanne Braun
Principal of École Parkside School

I have the best job in the world. I am the principal of École Parkside School, which serves Grade 7 and 8 students in Altona, Manitoba in the Border Land School Division. What I love about students at this age is their energy for life, their strong opinions and emotions, and their intense pursuit of a just and fair world.

Adolescence is really a remarkable period, as it is a time filled with tremendous opportunity to influence how the rest of our lives unfold and how we shape our emerging adult identity. It matters to me as a principal that our students develop into young adults who maintain a curiosity to learn and engage in the world around them. I want our students to love learning, to love reading, to question what they read, and to begin establishing a public voice, orally and in writing.

Fortunately, I also work with a group of teachers who are open to learn and who are willing to take risks together to share their successes and challenges in pursuit of being even better teachers tomorrow. I also work in a school division that supports our professional learning and collaboration in many ways.

Maybe you are thinking this all sounds too good to be true, but this reality did not happen without a lot of hard work, persistence, and careful and thoughtful planning. At École Parkside School, we have a plan that we all work together on executing.

For a number of years, literacy has been one of the priorities of this plan. Four years ago, when given the opportunity to get involved in the provincial Reading Apprenticeship pilot project, we jumped on board. We saw Reading Apprenticeship as a way to really support all of our teachers in understanding what it means to be a literacy teacher across the disciplines.

As a principal, I attended all of the teacher training days in each of the three years of the provincial project. As well, I volunteered, along with our Student Services Coordinator, to be a divisional leader for Reading Apprenticeship implementation in Border Land School Division. Doing so really helped me to develop a depth of understanding of Reading Apprenticeship. What became clear to me was how important it is for our teachers to understand that Reading Apprenticeship is a framework that defines quality classroom instruction; it is not just a bunch of reading strategies. At the heart of the framework is metacognition for students and for teachers, and the approach is through inquiry.

Since our involvement in Reading Apprenticeship, there has been a pay-off. During my walk-throughs, I see students reading, talking, and thinking in the classrooms. I hear students grappling with ideas and teachers guiding them with questions rather than directing them with answers. I see teachers modelling how they read and think when they deal with challenging texts in social studies, in science, in literature, and in math. I hear teachers sharing what is happening in their classrooms with one another and asking each other challenging questions to push their continued growth. Best of all, I see students demonstrating that they are thinking when they read and writing in ways that better explain how they are making sense of that reading.

It is that progress that I find so exciting and that makes me realize how fortunate we are to help students during this important time in their lives. That is why I cannot imagine there is a better job than the one I have.

Taking time to think and write individually and to talk in pairs and small groups is an important daily routine in classrooms using the Reading Apprenticeship framework.

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